

Press Release

**JULY 22, 2005**

**SCHAKOWSKY OPPOSES PATRIOT ACT REAUTHORIZATION**

**CALLS PROVISIONS IN PATRIOT ACT AN AFFRONT TO OUR CIVIL RIGHTS AND CIVIL LIBERTIES**

**WASHINGTON, DC - U.S. Representative Jan Schakowsky, Chief Deputy Whip, delivered a statement in the House of Representatives urging her colleagues to vote against the reauthorization of the Patriot Act. Representative Schakowsky has continually fought to limit the expansive new powers the Patriot Act grants federal agencies such as allowing them to secretly search personal records, including medical and library records, and permitting law enforcement officers to install roving wiretaps without specifying a suspect or telephone.**

**The vote reauthorizing the Patriot Act may have been the final chance the House of Representatives had to alter the controversial provisions in the legislation. While the 2001 version of the Patriot Act required Congress to revisit the legislation in four years, all but two of its expiring provisions are made permanent by the legislation the House passed on July 21<sup>st</sup>. The legislation also puts an excessively long ten-year sunset on those two provisions (the secret search of personal records and roving wiretap provisions).**

**In 2001, Representative Schakowsky was one of only 66 Representatives in the House, and 67 Members in the entire Congress, to vote against the Patriot Act.**

**Representative Schakowsky's statement urging her colleagues to vote against the reauthorization of the PATRIOT Act is below:**

**"Mr. Speaker, I voted against the PATRIOT Act four years ago and I remain opposed to it. While I support a number of the tools the PATRIOT Act grants to law enforcement in the fight to combat terrorism, it went too far in eroding important civil liberties, limiting the right to due process, and unnecessarily targeting immigrants."**

**"The PATRIOT Act reauthorization process gives Congress a crucial opportunity and responsibility to reevaluate some of the decisions that were made in the emotional and fear-filled weeks following the 9/11 terrorist attacks and improve national security without jeopardizing personal liberty. The only reason we are having this debate over controversial provisions within the PATRIOT Act is because Congress agreed to set sunsets on these provisions four years ago. Minimally, the sunsets on the original 16 expiring provisions should be retained so that Congress can reconsider these new federal powers in the future if they prove too expansive."**

**"H.R. 3199 fails to restore proper checks and balances and leaves everyday American citizens vulnerable to unnecessary and unreasonable government intrusion. Overbroad and overzealous investigations cloaked in secrecy have already had a chilling effect on Americans in their practice of freedom of speech, religion, and associations. The PATRIOT Act places these freedoms in jeopardy."**

**"Although proponents of the bill have argued that there are no known abuses of the new law enforcement powers granted by the PATRIOT Act, because of the way the law is written, Congress has no way to know whether or not abuses have occurred. We do know that hundreds of immigrants and citizens have been detained or spied on for no reason other than their religion or nationality. Also, more than 200 libraries have been asked to turn over their records to law enforcement officials, and the sneak and peak search provision has been used at least 248 times to search homes and offices without notifying the occupants."**

**"The USA PATRIOT Act threatens the rights of all Americans. A CBS News poll found that 52% of Americans were either 'very concerned' or 'somewhat concerned' about losing civil liberties as a result of the PATRIOT Act. According to a CNN/Gallup poll, 64% believe the government should take steps to protect additional acts of terrorism but not if those steps would violate our civil liberties."**

**"I join the majority of Americans who want to protect our nation's security while preserving Constitutional freedoms and civil liberties.□ Sweeping and unnecessary federal surveillance and unchecked law enforcement powers undermine the rights that are the cornerstone of our democracy."**

**"The Constitution that I carry is not a Republican document, it's not a Democratic document, it's an American document that we want to preserve.□ The PATRIOT Act is an affront to our civil rights and civil liberties, as guaranteed by our Constitution."**